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Senate

(Legislative day of Wednesday, December 10, 2008)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord God, You open to us horizons of hope through faith's resources. Let Your grace undergird our Senators' lives, as You fill their days with a knowledge of Your will. Guide them to solutions that best honor You, as they find in You a resource for every need. Deepen their desire to please You, opening to them new opportunities to obey Your commands. Strengthen their worthy desires and be for them a shelter in the storm. May they grow in grace and in knowledge of You.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK L. PRYOR led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 11, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a

Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PRYOR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 7005, the legislative vehicle for the auto industry's financing and restructuring. Rollcall votes are possible during today's session in the Senate.

When we left here a few weeks ago, the decision was made that there would be 1 week for the automobile industry to make presentations to the two committees of jurisdiction, the House and the Senate Banking Committees, to determine what would take place during the following week. That was last week, and hearings were held in both committees, and evidence, in fact, was taken. There have been weeks and weeks of work put into coming up with a piece of legislation on which we can vote. That matter is before the Senate in H.R. 7005.

I have had calls from a number of Senators today—frankly, mostly Republican Senators—telling me that they have the solution to all of the problems of the auto industry; they need a few amendments. A few amendments. We have done our very best to include everyone who wants any input

into this legislation. The White House, President Bush and his people have been heavily involved in this legislation. This is, in effect, the White House's legislation.

There was a decision made that the minority would not participate in the preparing of this legislation. But the White House was heavily involved. Negotiations took place over days between Chairman FRANK and Chairman DODD and the White House, and we now have a piece of legislation. Some have asked: Well, what we want is to set up a procedure where we have lots of amendments, and then we will ultimately vote on the final version.

I think it is only fair that if the minority, the Republicans, want to have a better bill, then they should offer an alternative. I invite them to do it. The House passed a bill last night. It would be my suggestion that we perhaps have a vote on the substitute or the alternative the Republicans would put forward, vote on the House bill, vote on the Senate bill. If there is no agreement that can be reached on that, we have danced this tune long enough.

What we will do, we can have a motion to proceed to this tomorrow, and if the Republicans want to come and say, well, you know, you have not allowed us any opportunity to offer amendments—that is what has taken place for the last 2 years, and look what it got the Republicans: lost seven or eight Senate seats, lost the Presidency. We want to legislate, and we are doing the very best we can to do that.

I have reached out to my Republican colleagues. As soon as the elections were over, I called a number of Republicans and said: We want to work with you. We cannot continue doing what we have done in the past. But we are right back where we have been for 2 years, the same place we have been for 2 years.

So, again, I suggest that if the Republicans have an alternative, let them

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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